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SOCIAL AND HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS: HUMAN RIGHTS

Letter dated 15 April 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 15 April 1998, addressed to you by His Excellency Mr. Aytuğ Plümer, Representative of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (see annex).

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Economic and Social Council, under item 14 (g) of the provisional agenda.

(Signed) Hüseyin E. ÇELEM
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex

LETTER DATED 15 APRIL 1998 FROM MR. AYTUĞ PLÜMER TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to refer to the statement made by the Greek Cypriot representative at the fifty-fourth session of the Commission on Human Rights in Geneva on 31 March 1998, under agenda item 18, in which unfounded allegations were levelled against my country, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, and Turkey.

The Greek Cypriot representative has alleged that Turkey "invaded" Cyprus and that "the Turkish invasion did not end in 1974". Legal and historical facts clearly indicate otherwise. The Turkish intervention of 1974 came in the aftermath of a bloody coup d'état by Greece and its collaborators in Cyprus aimed at annexing the island of Cyprus. During the preceding 11 years between 1963 and 1974, the Turkish Cypriots struggled to protect their lives and fundamental rights in the face of constant terror and oppression perpetrated by Greek Cypriots. Hundreds of Turkish Cypriots fell victim to Greek Cypriot atrocities, while villages throughout the island were attacked and devastated, rendering one fourth of the Turkish Cypriot population homeless refugees. The following paragraphs from a periodic report of the Secretary-General attest to the extent of the destruction of life and property perpetrated by the Greek Cypriots:

> "180. UNFICYP carried out a detailed survey of all damage to properties throughout the island during the disturbances ... It shows that in 109 villages, most of them Turkish Cypriot or mixed villages, 527 houses have been destroyed while 2000 others have suffered damage from looting."
>
> "190. In addition to losses incurred in agriculture and in industry during the first part of the year, the Turkish community had lost other sources of its income ... The trade of the Turkish community had considerably declined during the period, due to the existing situation, and unemployment reached a very high level as approximately 25,000 Turkish Cypriots had become refugees." (S/5950, 10 September 1964)

The Turkish Cypriot people were saved from an impending massacre by the timely and legitimate intervention of Turkey, in exercise of its rights and obligations under the 1960 Treaty of Guarantee.

At present, the only "invasion" and "occupation" in Cyprus is the continuing illegal occupation of the seat of government by the Greek Cypriot administration in violation of international treaties and the rule of law.

Against the background of unprecedented cruelty and violence, the Greek Cypriot administration continues to employ an extensive inhuman embargo with a view to preventing the exercise by the Turkish Cypriots of their human rights and isolating Northern Cyprus from the international community.

The allegations put forward by the Greek Cypriot delegate regarding the "destruction and desecration" of cultural heritage in Northern Cyprus are totally unfounded. The Greek Cypriot side has launched an extensive smear campaign, based on false and misleading data, with a view to projecting a distorted image of Northern Cyprus. These allegations have been refuted in toto by impartial observers and experts who have visited the island on different occasions. On the other hand, Ottoman Turkish architecture in South Cyprus is under threat of disintegration due to the Greek Cypriot side's utter contempt for and failure at protecting these sites. In recent years, Greek Cypriot bias and enmity towards Turkish Cypriots have frequently led to attacks on relics belonging to the Islamic heritage, leaving behind damaged, burnt and desecrated mosques in South Cyprus.

The Greek Cypriot representative has also made false complaints about the living conditions of Greek Cypriots in Northern Cyprus. The living standards of Greek Cypriots as well as Maronites are on a par with those of Turkish Cypriots in the area. Contrary to the Greek Cypriot representative's allegation, there is no limitation on the number of persons visiting a place of worship in Northern Cyprus, subject to the procedures for entry currently in force.

The dire living conditions of the Turkish Cypriots residing in the South, however, are in stark contrast with the prevailing normal situation in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. The following excerpt taken from the human rights report of the United States Department of State (1997) speaks for itself:

> "Some Turkish Cypriots living in the (Greek Cypriot) controlled area face difficulties in obtaining identification cards and other government documents, especially if they were born after 1974. Turkish Cypriots also appear to be subjected to harassment and surveillance by the Greek Cypriot police. One Turkish Cypriot man was murdered in the South in August by unknown assailants."

The Turkish Cypriot side is hopeful that the international community will give the necessary strong signals to the Greek Cypriot side with a view to ending the unrelenting campaign of defamation which is deepening the current crisis of confidence between the two peoples and the two states.

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter could be circulated as a document of the Economic and Social Council under item 14 (g) of the provisional agenda.

(Signed) Aytuğ PLUMER
Representative
Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus